



Research Snippet

A Profile Comparison of Federally Sentenced Women 1991-2010

KEY WORDS: women offenders, Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, Shaw survey, profile comparison

Impetus

In 1989, the Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada established the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women to examine the lives and experiences of women serving federal sentences in Canada. At this time, a research initiative was undertaken to interview women in correctional facilities, and those being supervised in the community, about their experiences during incarceration. This research culminated in the Survey of Federally Sentenced Women (Shaw, 1991) which contributed greatly to the groundbreaking Creating Choices Report (Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, 1990).

Nearly twenty years have passed since the research initiative, with many of the recommendations having been implemented, leading to substantial improvement in women's corrections in Canada. Accordingly, a research project was initiated to update the survey.

What we did

Based on the results outlined in Barrett, Allenby, and Taylor (2010), comparisons were made between Shaw's 1991 survey and the current 2010 survey.

It is important to note that the information outlined here is best considered in tandem with the above noted research as much greater detail is provided in relation to each of these areas with only key areas of interest being represented.

What we found

	Survey Year	
	1991	2010
General		
Women with Children	64%	77%
Satisfied with Grievance Process	6%	36%
Program Access as a Priority in Desired Institutional Placement	41%	64%
Involvement with Native Elders	11%	40%
Health and Well-Being		
Psychological services rated as adequate or above	27%	56%

	1991	2010
Health and Well-Being (cont'd)		
Deterioration in Physical Condition since arrival at institution	50%	11%
Healthcare as Inadequate	62%	21%
Victimization		
Physical Abuse	68%	86%
Sexual Abuse	53%	68%
Employment / Education		
Women with Higher Education	15%	28%
Women with On the Job Training	4%	37%
Demographics		
Aboriginal Women in Sample	23%	32%

What it means

This research provides evidence for significant improvements since the closure of the Prison for Women and the implementation of Creating Choices while at the same time highlighting areas in need of further development. The information contributes to the decision making process thereby enhancing CSC's ability to respond to the needs of federal women offenders.

For more information

Barrett, M. R., Allenby, K., & Taylor, K. (2010). *Twenty years later: Revisiting the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women*. Research Report R-222. Ottawa: Correctional Service Canada.

Shaw, M., Rodgers, K., Blanchette, J., Hattem, T., Thomas, L.S and Tamarack, L. (1991) "Survey of Federally Sentenced Women: Report to the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women on the Prison Survey". Ottawa: Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada, User Report No. 1991-4.

Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women (1990) *Creating Choices: The Task Force Report of the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women*. Ottawa: Correctional Service of Canada

Prepared by: Ashley McConnell and Kelly Taylor

For more information

Research Branch
(613) 996-3287
research@csc-scc.gc.ca